

COMPANION TO OBSTETRICS. By C. L-H. Huang and V. G. Daniels. (Pp 240. £9.95). Lancaster, Lancs: MTP Press, 1983.

THIS book, 240 pages crammed full of obstetric facts and figures, is written by two doctors who, after junior obstetric hospital posts, pursued careers in other areas of medicine.

It is constructed along traditional lines with introductory chapters on anatomy, physiology and applied embryology. There follow accounts of antenatal care, abnormal pregnancy and pregnancy-related systemic illness. Intrapartum care looks at normal and abnormal features with the final chapters on third stage and surgical obstetrics. Simple line drawings help to illustrate the text.

The material presented is without doubt comprehensive but such a tabulated style is unable to offer any discussion on management problems. Therein lies the strength or weakness of such a book — it assumes a basic knowledge and thus offers a tidy presentation of obstetric facts suitable for revision.

There are some areas of management which could be considered out-of-date, for example, the need for diazepam in mild pre-eclampsia or the value of diuretics in the more severe state of this syndrome. In the fast developing area of antenatal fetal assessment no mention is made of fetal cardiotocography. However, the general thrust of the book offers broad dogmatic statements which on the whole are a fair reflection of current obstetric thinking. With such a proliferation of short obstetric text books now available to the midwife or medical student this volume may suffer from the rigours of competition. Any prospective buyer would do well to sample other "companions" before any commitment to purchase.

EBB

ANAESTHESIA FOR OPERATING THEATRE TECHNICIANS. By C. A. Foster and Bridget Jepson. Second Edition, (Pp xii + 255, Figs 102. £9.00). London: Lloyd-Luke, 1983.

THIS is a new edition of a book first published in 1968 and the authors are to be congratulated on developing such a useful and interesting text. Their writing skills are such that the undoubted difficulty of producing a "medical" book which can be appreciated by young technicians with limited medical knowledge seems not to have been a difficulty at all. The prose style is easy, the points made are clear and reasoned and, most welcome of all, there is no jargon.

The main emphasis of the book is on the practical aspects of the subject and there are chapters dealing with the technician as an assistant to the anaesthetist, apparatus, monitoring equipment, ventilators, the sterilization of instruments and equipment, and fires and explosions. The chapter on the basic pharmacology of drugs used in anaesthesia contains just the right amount of detail to allow an understanding and this applies generally throughout the book. The principles of anaesthesia and in particular the dangers associated with emergency procedures are described in depth. The authors are not content merely to be didactic and all through this admirable "little book" they support their statements with explanations. There are plenty of diagrams and figures which may possibly account for the rather high price. The book ends with seven very useful appendices dealing with endotracheal tube sizes and lengths, S.I. Units, abbreviations (IVP but not IMV), approved and trade names of drugs, battery sizes, pressure measurements and a comparison table of gauges (SWG etc).

There is little that the theatre technician will need to know which is not here. Perhaps a short chapter on the relevant anatomy and physiology would have been useful. My other minor criticism is of the cover which is particularly prone to fingermarking.

JPHF

A BACK PAIN BIBLIOGRAPHY. By Barry Wyke. (Pp xvi + 463. £17.50). London: Lloyd-Luke, 1983.

THIS book is exactly what the title proclaims — a list of references, historical, controversial, relevant, but of use only in the research environment. It is comprehensive and well presented, the one serious omission being an author index. The vast research effort that this volume represents has not made much impression on our understanding of spinal disorders, there is much to be done and this book will fulfil its objective by ensuring that talent is not wasted on repetition and subjective audit.

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